



MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

“EK BHARAT SHRESHTHA BHARAT”

I. Background:

There is no country like India, quite as diverse, multi-lingual and multi-cultural, yet bound together by the ancient bonds of shared traditions, culture and values. Such bonds need to be strengthened through enhanced & continuous mutual interaction between people of varied regions and ways of life so that it encourages reciprocity & secures an enriched value system of unity amongst people of different States in a culturally special country like India.

“**Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat**” was announced by Hon'ble Prime Minister on 31st October, 2015 on the occasion of the 140th birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel (Annexure I). Subsequently, the Finance Minister announced the initiative in his Budget Speech for 2016-17 (Annexure II). Through this innovative measure, the knowledge of the culture, traditions and practices of different States & UTs will lead to an enhanced understanding and bonding between the States, thereby strengthening the unity and integrity of India.

All States and UTs will be covered under the programme. There will be pairing of States/UTs at national level and these pairings will be in effect for one year, or till the next round of pairings. The State/UT level pairings would be utilized for state level activities. The activity will be very useful to link various States and Districts in annual programmes that will connect people through exchanges in areas of culture, tourism, language, education trade etc. and citizens will be able to experience the cultural

II. Objectives of Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat :

The broad objectives of the initiative are as follows:-

- i. To **CELEBRATE** the Unity in Diversity of our Nation and to maintain and strengthen the fabric of traditionally existing emotional bonds between the people of our Country;
- ii. To **PROMOTE** the spirit of national integration through a deep and structured engagement between all Indian States and Union Territories through a year-long planned engagement between States;
- iii. To **SHOWCASE** the rich heritage and culture, customs and traditions of either State for enabling people to understand and appreciate the diversity that is India, thus fostering a sense of common identity;
- iv. To **ESTABLISH** long-term engagements and
- v. To **CREATE** an environment which promotes learning between States by sharing best practices and experiences.

Key Themes:

- To celebrate the idea of India as a nation wherein different cultural units across varied geographies coalesce and interact with each other, this glorious manifestation of diverse cuisine, music, dance, theatre, movies & films, handicrafts, sports, literature, festivals, painting, sculpture etc. will enable people to imbibe the innate chord of binding and brotherhood.
- To make our people aware about the seamless integral hull of the Modern Indian State spread across a vast landmass on whose firm foundations, the geo-political strength of the country is ensured to benefit one and all.
- To impress upon people at large about the increasing inter-connectedness between the constituents of various cultures and traditions, which is so vital for the spirit of nation building.
- To induce a sense of responsibility & ownership for the nation as a whole through these close cross-cultural interactions as it intends to build up the inter-dependence matrix unequivocally.
- To further promote inter-state travel for boosting business activities of various hues.

- To create a learning ecosystem between the various stakeholders of the partnering states so that they benefit from the best practices of one another by establishing a State to State Connect.

III. Implementation Strategy/Methodology:

The EK Bharat Shreshtha Bharat Engagement Matrix between States and UTs for the First year would be as follows :

Jammu & Kashmir : Tamil Nadu
Punjab : Andhra Pradesh
Himachal Pradesh : Kerala
Uttarakhand : Karnataka
Haryana :Telangana
Rajasthan : West Bengal
Gujarat : Chhattisgarh
Maharashtra :Odisha
Goa : Jharkhand
Delhi : Sikkim & Assam
Madhya Pradesh : Manipur & Nagaland
Uttar Pradesh : Arunachal Pradesh & Meghalaya
Bihar : Tripura & Mizoram
Chandigarh : Dadra & Nagar Haveli
Puducherry : Daman & Diu
Lakshadweep : Andaman & Nicobar

The aforesaid States and UTs are to embark on a mission to unfurl their administrative, academic, economic and cultural ties by entering into a wide range of mutual engagements. Accordingly, an initial five year engagement plan is to be constituted whereby States and UTs mutually choose their learning partners for the consequent 4-5 years and enter into a wide range of activities as given in the indicative list to follow. The States/UTs may further evolve and develop the list of activities during the course of their interactions. For the funding of this programme, States/UTs/Districts can dovetail funds available under various programmes for conducting Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat events.

IV. Engagements/activities to be undertaken:

1. A national portal and a mobile app for Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat will be developed. Design of creative material may also be undertaken through crowd sourcing. An event platform would be created in the Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat portal and used to plan events. Details of events organized in states/districts will be posted on Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat portal. Events with the highest public approval will be selected for a national level event.
2. A public display area may be developed in all State capitals and district headquarters.
3. Text materials in all official Indian languages, using inputs from the States, also need to be developed and to be taught in all classes between paired states.
4. Dedicated social media for updating information about Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat activities will be maintained.
5. Development of reading/learning material for basic conversation in all Indian languages would also form a component of the programme along with the following:-
 - ❖ Instituting fellowships for higher studies between paired states;
 - ❖ Organizing National/State and District level events covering culture, heritage, cuisine, art, games & sports, debates, essay writing, quiz etc.
 - ❖ Student exchanges between paired states (NVs and KVs, colleges and universities etc.) through educational tours
 - ❖ Sharing of best practices in Governance in the fields of healthcare, education, sanitation, use of technology
 - ❖ Developing tour guide and home stay capacities with linguistic abilities
 - ❖ Joint assembly sessions/ministerial & legislative delegations between partner States
 - ❖ Exhibitions of State achievements between paired states and sharing programmes
 - ❖ Organizing essay competitions and online quizzes on Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat state specific themes
 - ❖ Multimedia enabled buses to travel through partner States for showcasing partner States culture, supplemented by artists/troupes who

- present programmes every night
- ❖ Cultural programmes in hotels and restaurants, special trains on Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat theme
- ❖ Sponsoring literature translations between partner states
- ❖ Connecting libraries (online as well as offline book sharing) between partner states
- ❖ Teacher exchange programmes
- ❖ Exposure of students of one State to alphabets, songs, proverbs and 100 sentences in the languages of the partner State.
- ❖ The music of each partner states to be promoted through various modes including Aakashvani, FM channels, music concerts, ring tones etc.
- ❖ Dance festivals of each one of the partner states may be organized. The dances can be further popularized by conducting dance contests carried popularly by corresponding regional channels.
- ❖ Organize culinary festivals with an opportunity to learn culinary practices and photography competitions highlighting culture and heritage of the Partner State.
- ❖ Prepare and share with the partner States a book containing information on their culture, customs, traditions, flora & fauna etc. for dissemination to schools and colleges.
- ❖ Theatre, movies & films of partner states to be promoted through specialized performances & screenings.
- ❖ Architecture & sculpture of each state to be promoted through various ways in form of photography contests
- ❖ Organising cycling expeditions for students / people of one State to the places in the partner State.
- ❖ Organising NCC, NSS Camps of students of one State at the locations in the partner State.
- ❖ Organising National / State Specific Quiz Competitions in various languages on TV / Radio / Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat website.
- ❖ Student excursions can be dovetailed with the existing curriculum needs and can converge into project reports, start-up ideas etc., during recess periods and vacation.

6. The corresponding Central Universities to choose to collaborate and learn from each other, Specific inter-disciplinary departments to be constituted to steer through the deeper intellectual connect between the partnering states.
7. The various State Universities, generic as well as specialized ones (engineering, management, agriculture etc.), to also choose to partner with their counterparts, have faculty exchanges and other innovative interventions with the objective of forging deeper academic ties and ensuring innovation from cultural contextualizing.
8. The native languages of the partner states to be promoted specifically with the objective of overlaying and comparing the cultural traditions. Such language programmes from beginner to intermediate levels can be introduced in partner states utilizing the third language instrument. Eg: The regional stations of DD and AIR to host special cross lingual programmes and promotions to this effect.
9. Flagship Unity Week is to be celebrated in all States simultaneously across the country starting on 31st October of a year wherein focus would be on Performing Arts, Cuisines, Exhibitions, and Films etc. These celebrations shall be held either in State capital or a major town.
10. Under the scheme proposed by Ministry of Culture i.e. National Mission on Cultural Mapping & Roadmap and its integration with Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat, data base of talented artists shall be created through talent search process or competition to be held from village level to National level. Under the Scheme a National Cultural Work Place (NCWP) is also to be created to serve as common interaction work place for all stake holders including artistes, institutions, NGOs and other respective central ministries.
11. Various concerned Ministries/Departments will formulate their programme/schemes as per their mandate for integration with Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat.

V. Co-ordination and Monitoring

- The Apex Committee chaired by Hon'ble Prime Minister shall provide overall guidance and direction to the programme
- With a view to review, monitor and supervise the implementation of the programme, there will be an overarching Coordination Committee in the Cabinet Secretariat with Secretary (Co-ordination) , Secretary, Culture; Secretary, Youth Affairs; Secretary , Tourism ; Secretary, Sports; Secretary, School Education and Literacy, Secretary, Higher Education; Secretary , Information and Broadcasting.
- A project monitoring unit/Programme Secretariat is to be constituted under the Ministry of Human Resource Development to coordinate national level activities. Ministry of Human Resource Development , as the nodal agency, will issue the guidelines of Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat after organizing a meeting of the National Committee. In the first phase there would be three Committees.



Relevant Extracts from the Text of PM's address at the "Run for Unity" event on Rashtriya Ekta Diwas at Rajpath in the context of Ek Bharath Shreshtha Bharath

If 125 crore Indians walk together shoulder to shoulder with the mantra of unity, peace and harmony, then the country takes 125 crore steps in one go. The main strength of our nation is that we are bound together by the principle of unity in diversity. We can do any length to maintain this unity. Unity is the message Sardar Sahib gave us.

In the days ahead, we are going to launch a new initiative under which every State will choose another State each year to promote its language and culture. We are consulting States in this regard. I have set up a small committee to work out modalities in this regard. This is one way of ensuring "Ek Bharat, Shreshth Bharat".

For example, if Haryana chooses Tamil Nadu in 2016 in this regard, then at least 100 sentences of Tamil language should be taught to students in each school. People of Haryana should be exposed to Tamil language and culture by suitably organizing some events including Tamil food festival and even trips to Tamil Nadu should be organized. Tamil Nadu should do the same in respect of Haryana including cultural and student exchanges. This would open a new chapter in our country towards further enriching unity. Next year, Haryana and Tamil Nadu should pick up another State for such exchanges which in due course help in understanding each other better besides appreciating the exclusive strength of our country which is 'Unity in diversity'. This is how we can realize "Ek Bharat, Shreshth Bharat".

Dr.APJ Abdul Kalam once narrated one of his fabulous experiences. He said that when he embarked on his journey from Rameswaram to Delhi for the first time by train, he came across a new language, new dialect and new cuisine after every hour. He was amazed to get a glimpse of a mini-India on train, abound with diversity, which he could not properly appreciate and understand through books. He comprehended it in one go during his train journey.

By taking pride in this uniqueness of our country and adopting diversity as our way of life will go a long way in further enriching and empowering our country. Today's celebration of Sardar Sahib's birth anniversary should be a profound occasion for us to draw inspiration in this direction. I pay my respectful tributes and bow to Sardar Sahib. His blessings and those of all others who sacrificed their lives and toiled for Mother India would give us the strength to preserve the national unity and integration as we march collectively to scale new heights of development.

I will recite a pledge here and request you all to take this pledge by repeating it. I request you all to stand in your places, imagine Mother India and recall the memory of all great leaders of our country and particularly, Sardar Sahib on this occasion. Now repeat what I am going to cite.

“I solemnly pledge that I dedicate myself to preserve the unity, integrity and security of the nation and also strive hard to spread this message among my fellow countrymen. I take this pledge in the spirit of unification of my country which was made possible by the vision and actions of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. I also solemnly resolve to make my own contribution to ensure internal security of my country.”

Bharat Mata Ki Jai !, Bharat Mata Ki Jai !, Bharat Mata Ki Jai !

Annexure- II

Budget Announcement, 2016-17 : Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat

104. Madam Speaker, for good governance, we have to capitalise on the country's unity in diversity. To strengthen understanding of each other, it is proposed to create a closer engagement between different States and Districts in a structured manner. "Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat" programme will be launched to link States and Districts in an annual programme that connects people through exchanges in areas of language, trade, culture, travel and tourism. We will do this through mutual agreement with participating States and Districts.

105. In 2017, the country will celebrate 70th Anniversary of our Independence. We will chalk out milestones for nation's journey beyond the 70th Anniversary of Independence. Dr. Toynbee, the historian, had observed that "a chapter which had a Western beginning will have to have an Indian ending.....". My belief is that the year 2017 will unfold the great historian's dream. Our scheme of "Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat" is part of this vision.
